

Reasonable adjustments

Welcoming patients with intellectual disability in primary health care

Small changes make a big difference

Small changes, when implemented in your practice, will make a big impact in welcoming patients with intellectual disability. These changes are called **reasonable adjustments**. Reasonable adjustments support better health care for people with intellectual disability.

Definition of reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are necessary and possible to allow fair access and treatment in primary health care. This can include changes to services, buildings, and procedures which are tailored to meet an individual's needs and require ongoing review.

Why is there a need to improve access to health care?

People with intellectual disability have the right to access high-quality health care. They often have complex health needs and experience poorer health outcomes than the general population. Health inequalities can be improved by reducing barriers that prevent access to health services.

Compared with the general population, people with intellectual disability experience:

- more than twice the rate of avoidable deaths
- twice the rate of emergency department and hospital admissions
- much higher rates of physical and mental health conditions
- significantly lower rates of access to preventive health services.

Practical examples of reasonable adjustments

Some practical examples include¹:

- Communication – talk to the person. Talk about one thing at a time. Use plain words.
- Use visual aids and communication aids, such as pictures, diagrams, or the [My Health Matters Folder](#).
- Provide health information, [appointment letters](#) and 'how to find us' sheets in Easy Read format.
- Appointments – encourage longer and more frequent appointments. Send reminders for appointments.
- Provide quiet waiting spaces.
- Help patients to complete forms.

For further information, training and support in welcoming patients with intellectual disability into your practice, please email providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au or call 1300 653 169.

The Better health care for people with intellectual disability – Primary Care Enhancement Program (PCEP) is funded by the Australian Government

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ABN 47 082 572 629

¹ This information has been adapted from University of Hertfordshire website content: bit.ly/3G4m1sh